United Nations S/2018/607

Security Council

Distr.: General
14 June 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 13 June 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 13 June 2018 from Cabinet member and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates, Anwar Mohammed Gargash, regarding recent developments in Hudaydah, Yemen (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would arrange for the present letter and its annex to be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Lana **Nusseibeh**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

18-09844 (E) 190618

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Annex to the letter dated 13 June 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

The United Arab Emirates has deployed forces in Yemen since 2015 at the request of the legitimate Government of Yemen to protect Yemen and its people from the continuing aggression by the Houthis, as part of a multi-member Arab coalition led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Security Council was duly informed of that request in a letter dated 24 March 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations and in identical letters dated 26 March 2015 addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (S/2015/217), as noted in the preamble to Security Council resolution 2216 (2015).

As a member of the coalition, the principal objective of the United Arab Emirates has always been, and continues to be, restoring the sovereignty of the legitimate and internationally recognized Government of Yemen, and bringing an end to the conflict in Yemen which the Houthis began. The coalition is acting in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions, the Initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council and its implementation mechanism, and the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference.

On 14 April 2015, the Security Council adopted resolution 2216 (2015), in which it made a series of demands to the Houthis, to be implemented immediately and unconditionally, including ending the use of violence, withdrawing their forces from all areas they had seized, relinquishing all additional arms seized from military and security institutions, ceasing all actions that were exclusively within the authority of the legitimate Government of Yemen, refraining from any provocation or threats to neighbouring States, ending the recruitment and use of children, and releasing all children from their ranks. To date, the Houthis have not implemented those demands, in clear violation of resolution 2216 (2015).

Leaving the Houthi militia in control of large areas of northern Yemen while they continue to perpetrate lethal ballistic missile attacks on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia would not only leave resolution 2216 (2015) unfulfilled, it would also compromise the national security of the United Arab Emirates and other States in our region. In this regard, we reaffirm our legitimate right to self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations and customary international law.

As Security Council members are well aware, the United Arab Emirates has always sought a negotiated resolution to this conflict. Our military operations have been conducted to that end. However, efforts to find a political solution have been stalled for nearly two years by Houthi intransigence, to the detriment of the Yemeni population. Further prolonging the present situation would only increase the suffering of the Yemeni people.

The legitimate Government of Yemen and the coalition have come to the conclusion that depriving the Houthi militia of its control over the port of Hudaydah is the most effective way to bring the Houthis to the negotiating table and end the conflict. We believe that this is militarily possible and that it can be achieved with minimal impact on Yemeni civilians, whose safety is of utmost concern. The Yemeni Government is fully in support of this operation, and has requested local Yemeni forces to play a leading role in it. The United Arab Emirates affirms its commitment to complying with international humanitarian law and to implementing the principles of precaution, proportionality and discrimination in the conduct of its operations.

The coalition has delayed this operation for over a year, in response to concerns voiced by the United Nations and relief agencies. During that time, Hudaydah has continued to be the principal gateway used by the Houthi militia for the illegal smuggling of Iranian weaponry, in flagrant violation of resolutions 2216 (2015) and 2231 (2015), including the sophisticated Iranian missiles and drones used against civilian targets in Saudi Arabia in recent months. In this regard, the United Arab Emirates notes that the final report of the Panel of Experts on Yemen (S/2018/68) found Iran to be in non-compliance with the arms embargo established by paragraph 14 of resolution 2216 (2015) by failing to take the necessary measures to prevent the sale or supply of arms and equipment to the Houthi militias. It has unfortunately become clear that the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen has not been effective in preventing this continued flow of weaponry.

In addition, the United Arab Emirates remains gravely concerned by the grossly negligent operation of the port under the Houthis' control and by its humanitarian impact. The Houthis have demonstrated that they have no regard for the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence: they have regularly confiscated the coalition's aid shipments and corruptly mismanaged the port in a way that has had a catastrophic impact on the humanitarian situation in Yemen. The Houthis have repeatedly rejected proposals for the port to be placed under United Nations control, including the most recent push by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Martin Griffiths. Ending Houthi control of the port city and restoring the legitimate Government's control will be welcomed by its inhabitants and will improve its capacity to deliver much-needed supplies to inland areas of northern Yemen.

All peaceful means to address the serious humanitarian consequences of the Houthi control of the port of Hudaydah have been exhausted. Most recently, the coalition agreed to a 48-hour postponement of military operations in Hudaydah to provide Mr. Griffiths with additional time to negotiate the peaceful withdrawal of the Houthis. Regrettably, and notwithstanding the Special Envoy's commendable efforts, the coalition's conditions — requiring the Houthis to withdraw from Hudaydah completely, hand over control to the legitimate Government of Yemen and cooperate in the demining efforts — were rejected.

The Arab coalition has concluded that the time has come to liberate the port of Hudaydah from Houthi control. The United Arab Emirates cares deeply about the welfare of the Yemeni people and has contributed nearly $4 billion in assistance to Yemen in the past three years. The United Arab Emirates is committed to ensuring the continued flow of food and vital supplies to the wider Yemeni population, both in Hudaydah and the areas that it supplies. Our military action aims to minimize any negative impact on the working of the port itself. The United Arab Emirates will exercise utmost caution so as to avoid any physical damage to the port. The United Arab Emirates hopes that the Security Council will receive the same assurance from the Houthi side for the well-being of the people of Yemen.

Furthermore, consistent with the long-standing commitment of the United Arab Emirates to the legitimate Government of Yemen and the Yemeni people, I would like to inform you that the United Arab Emirates has developed, over the past year, a comprehensive plan for a large-scale humanitarian operation to ensure the continued flow of essential supplies and shelter to the civilian population under a range of scenarios. Key immediate features of this plan include:

- Measures to ensure the rapid delivery of enough food within the first week to sustain 600,000 people for a month. This intensified flow of aid will continue until the port has been restored, which the United Arab Emirates anticipates will take place within two weeks of the operation commencing.

- The deployment of port and logistics experts to address any damage to the port infrastructure perpetrated by the Houthis.
- Minesweeping operations to open a safe channel to the port once it is secured.
- The restoration of operations at Hudaydah airport and alternative means to deliver aid to Hudaydah and beyond.
- Close coordination with United Nations and other international humanitarian agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations operating on the ground.

Further details of this plan, including contingencies and countrywide coverage, will be provided shortly by our Minister of State for International Cooperation, Reem Al Hashimy.

The United Arab Emirates will continue to work closely with the Special Envoy to achieve the peaceful negotiated solution that we all seek. It is the United Arab Emirates' firm belief that this operation will bring that solution closer, and with it a return to constitutional rule in Yemen and an end to its people's suffering.

(*Signed*) Anwar **Gargash**
Minister of State for Foreign Affairs

18-09844